

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 004910

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ, INR/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 15th  
ELECTION, TRANSPARENCY, SADDAM HUSSEIN TRIAL; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: The major theme in today's editorials was the upcoming election.

Analysis: Independent As-Sabah published a front-page editorial entitled "Technocrats" which dealt with how technocrats have been marginalized in the current Iraqi political process.

Independent As-Sabah Al-Jadeed published a front-page editorial about Saddam's trial chronicling the criminal history of Saddam and his followers.

At-Taakhi's front-page editorial, "Faii Kurds. An Endless National Determination" addressed the history of the Faii (Shi'a) Kurds in Iraq while another editorial on page three, "List 730 is the Safe Resort" argued that the list will carry all Iraqis toward progress and prosperity.

Ad-Dawa's page-five editorial, "About the Trial of the Dictator" criticized the court for its weakness in a popular Shi'a critique. "We understand that Saddam's crimes do not require a trial and we reiterate that this court must be harsher," the writer demanded.

Dar As-Salam, affiliated with Iraqi Islamic Party led by Muhsin Abdul Hamid, published a page-two editorial calling for Iraqi citizens to vote for list 618.

The Iraqi Business Community, a weekly, economic/vocational paper issued by the Iraqi Businessmen's Union, published a front-page editorial, "People's Goals Can Be Achieved Not Only through Electoral Promises but through Tangible and Practical Work," that, like other publications, displayed a frustration with candidates' hollow promises. END SUMMARY.

-----  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
-----

- [1A.](#) "Cut and Run to Victory" (Al-Basaer, 12/8)
- [1B.](#) "Slogans to Be Trampled" (Az-Zaman, 12/8)
- [1C.](#) "Destiny" (Al-Adala, 12/8)
- [1D.](#) "Electoral Campaigns" (Al-Fourat 12/8)
- [1E.](#) "The Coming Election and the Provision of Secure Environments" (Az-Zaman, 12/8)

-----  
SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
-----

- [1A.](#) "Cut and Run to Victory"  
(Al-Basaer - affiliated with the Muslim Scholars' Association, anti-coalition, published this front-page unattributed editorial)

"The recent statements by the American president Bush show that his administration suffers from a deep crisis; it seems that Bush has become very confused. His numerous statements aim to flirt with American public opinion. However, we know that the American people rejected the war against Iraq. In addition, some Congressional members have demanded U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq because losses are increasing.

"Bush, like any other tyrant, cannot admit defeat. He said to his American opponents that 'We will not leave Iraq prematurely as long as I am president of the United States.' He added, 'America will not cut and run while I am the Commander in Chief of the armed forces.' Bush seems to be very arrogant while speaking about how impossible it is to accomplish dreams. He is speaking about victory to boost the weak morale of his soldiers in Iraq--recently, his soldiers were defeated in their Operation Shank.

"Bush speaks about complete victory while he is discussing the issue of withdrawal or escaping from Iraq. On one hand, he says that he will not cut and run from Iraq while on the other he contradicts himself when he says that his forces will come back home. The most surprising thing is that the request for withdrawal has come from the senior commander of the American Army, General George Casey. He asked for a plan that has multiple choices but all of those choices referred to how to withdraw from Iraq at the beginning of next year. In any case, the internal situation in the battle of Iraq

will determine the final word. All evidence indicates that the American occupation forces are suffering from a complete breakdown in morale and they are preparing to escape from Iraq. Most Iraqis say that the real victory Bush speaks about is that he wants to complete the long-term contracts for Iraqi oil and not for the sake of military triumph."

**B. "Slogans to Be Trampled"**

(Az-Zaman - independent, published this back-page editorial by Fatih Abdul Salam)

"All the electoral slogans of the political parties have gone with the wind. So far, we have not seen any truthful electoral slogans. Most of the faces are repeated and the slogans copied--slogans that contain ridiculous and useless compositions, though this does not mean that there are no real honest candidates.

"Iraqi voters are more aware in this election and they will not be deceived by false slogans like those of the former election which revealed those who deceived voters with their surreal slogans; when they were elected their bigotry and sectarianism was clearly transparent.

"Some described the current cheap methods of the electoral competition as proof of lack of awareness and behavior among Iraqi politicians. I think we should stop this wrong practice in a civilized way so that Iraqis can freely vote. After the last election the Iraqi people witnessed many slogans, which were trampled and tampered with. At this point, sectarianism and nationalism have become the main goal of the electoral slogans. But, after holding the upcoming election will we see a new Iraqi leadership that puts the country above all interests?"

**C. "Destiny"**

(Al-Adala - affiliated with SCIRI, led by Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, no bias, published this page-three editorial by Ali Khalif)

"The decisive election is approaching and the Iraqi people have only days to decide their future. Election day will resolve all accomplishments that were achieved after the downfall of the dictatorship. If the Iraqi people want to preserve these accomplishments, they must make the best choice when they head for the ballot boxes. They must choose the one who sacrificed for them; they must elect the one who has a real patriotic history.

"The Iraqi people must not chase statements that represent the same ideologies of the deposed dictator. This dictator and his followers are still calling for those philosophies even though they are behind bars. The Iraqi people know for sure that those who fought the dictatorship for decades are still making sacrifices for the sake of the people. We must preserve our accomplished achievements because the enemies of Iraq want to destroy every Iraqi achievement.

"However, the Iraqi people who sacrificed in the past and are still sacrificing will not accept anyone tampering with their votes. The Iraqi people will decide their future and they will choose their own men. The Iraqi political scene indicates that the coming election will be decisive; the people have two choices--either moving backwards and destroying all achievements or progressing toward freedom, equality, justice and an end to suffering."

**D. "Electoral Campaigns"**

(Al-Fourat - independent, anti-coalition, published this page-two editorial by Majid Fadhel Az-Zaboon)

"The coming parliamentary election will be held within a few days and the electoral campaigns of most of the political parties are about finished. Those entities and parties worked hard during the past weeks to present their political and economic platforms presented through posters, ads and flyers that were disseminated throughout Iraq. However, the scientific and practical platforms are absent. All political parties depended on slogans that play with citizens' emotions and feelings rather than dealing with their minds. This means that most of these platforms are not equal to the national responsibility that must be adopted by political parties.

"The future of Iraq cannot be summarized by bombastic words or slogans. What happened in Iraq was so enormous that it needs a lot of hard work and effort during the coming four years in order to repair this country. The upcoming election is an historic responsibility that everybody should undertake because it is the most dangerous and important stage in Iraq's history. We must study all the political and economic platforms of the electoral lists and candidates. In addition, we must realize that the current Iraqi problems and crises can be solved only according to real and scientific standards. Moreover, we must depend on academicians and experts in order to reach a solution.

"Most of the electoral platforms suffer from superficiality and this indicates that there is a big gap between citizens

and politicians. Therefore, such weak vision, which is made by politicians, will create an imbalance between people's demands and political parties' wishes. Perhaps, we can justify this shortcoming by saying that this is the first experiment--but, we cannot accept such an excuse in the coming years."

**1E. "The Coming Election and the Provision of Secure Environments"**

(Az-Zaman - independent, anti-coalition, published this back-page editorial by Fatih Abdul Salam)

"Parliamentary election will be held within a few days amid significant challenges and difficult conditions. However, the Iraqi people have made an epic journey when they voted during the former election. This time, this election will witness wider participation. Thus, the Ministry of Interior must pay more attention to providing security for voters in the upcoming election.

"Media outlets announced that the Ministry of Interior has begun implementing a security plan for the coming election. Intensive patrols have started and checkpoints have been placed at the entries and exits of cities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior has announced that crimes have decreased by 70% and this news makes people psychologically comfortable. This percentage may be correct if we are speaking about the car bombs but there are other crimes that are committed daily. On a daily basis, media outlets report assassinations, kidnappings and killings against doctors, security members and government employees.

"If those crimes continue, they will negatively affect the electoral process. Perhaps, this will prevent people from widely participating in the coming election. Therefore, security forces must intensify their presence so that citizens can feel that there is sovereignty and rule of law in this country. In addition, we would like to reiterate that those crimes must end quickly because voters cannot head to the ballot boxes amid violence and disorder."

KHALILZAD